

18 OCT 1950

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GENERAL

1. British oppose SC handling of Ambon dispute--According to US Embassy London, the decision of the UN Commission for Indonesia to refer the current Ambon dispute to the Security Council is causing considerable misgiving in the British Foreign Office. UK diplomatic officials fear that the Western Powers may have to assume a neutral position in the dispute and that the USSR will then be able to seize the opportunity to pose as an enemy of colonialism and a champion of the Asiatic nations, a stand which India would doubtless support. The Foreign Office is tentatively taking the position that the UK delegation should attempt to prevent UN consideration of the Ambon problem, in anticipation of the possibility that the military action will be concluded in Indonesia shortly, thereby presenting the Security Council with an accomplished fact.

Meanwhile, the Department of State has instructed US Ambassador Cochran at Jakarta to impress upon the Indonesian Government the desirability of accepting the good offices of the UN Commission for Indonesia in settling the Ambon dispute. Cochran is to point out that a Security Council discussion of the subject is likely to raise questions concerning the degree to which Indonesia has fulfilled the conditions of the 1949 Hague Round Table Conference settlement.

FAR EAST

2. INDOCHINA: French admit grave defeat--US Legation Saigon reports that General Carpentier, commander of French Forces in the Far East, recently acknowledged the gravity of the French defeat near Caobang. Stating that the five trapped battalions represented the "very best" of French forces in Indochina,

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TOP SECRET

T O P S E C R E T

Carpentier admitted that the only remaining reserve unit capable of immediate action in North Vietnam was a single paratroop battalion in Hanoi. Estimating French losses at "around 2,500 men," Carpentier declared that the guerrilla type of war has now ended in the north; he indicated the French force had been "demolished" by 10,000 Viet Minh troops operating with modern efficiency, having good artillery support, and fighting "on orthodox lines." Carpentier expressed the opinion that under these circumstances further "determined" Viet Minh attacks could force the French to abandon the remaining eastern frontier posts from Langson down to Moncay.

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